

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6, 8, 11-13, 15-20, 22-25 and 27-28 are pending upon entry of this amendment. Claims 1, 8 and 17 have been amended. Claims 2-3, 7, 9-10, 14, 21 and 26 have been cancelled. No new matter has been presented.

Claims 1, 8 and 15-20 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei, JP Patent No. 07215551, in view of Miyakoshi, JP Patent No. 05053395. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites “a braking force setting device configured to *variably* set the braking force” (emphasis added). This feature is not taught or suggested by the combination of Chinzei and Miyakoshi. As explained on page 2, line 20 to page 3, line 12 of the specification, Chinzei, which the Examiner relies upon as allegedly teaching this feature, applies a constant braking force (i.e., back load force) to the printing paper sheet. As a result, in Chinzei, any imbalance between the feeding forces respectively working on the upstream and downstream sides of the feeding device, however small, results in a deviation in the positioning of the paper sheet relative to the photosensitive drum. In the claimed invention, in order to provide a higher precision than the device of Chinzei, among other objectives, the braking force applied to the continuous paper sheet is variably set such that the imbalance between the feeding forces is compensated for. Thus, Chinzei does not teach this feature of the claimed invention.

The Examiners asserts that embodiments 2 and 4 of Chinzei described in paragraphs [0015] and [0019] and shown in FIGS. 4 and 6 teach a setting device that variably sets the braking force. Applicants respectfully disagree. In the second embodiment of Chinzei, in order to properly set the back load force in comparison to the feeding force of the paper sheet, several rollers having different torque limiters are placed in order and, based on the desired amount of back load, an appropriate roller is applied to the paper sheet. Chinzei, para. [0015]. A similar concept applies to the fourth embodiment of Chinzei except that brushes, instead of rollers, are used to apply the back

load force. However, in both these embodiments of Chinzei, once a roller or a brush is set for printing a continuous paper sheet, the braking force from that roller or brush is applied constantly throughout the printing process and the brushes are not set variably as, for example, printing conditions or paper thickness changes. There is no suggestion or teaching in Chinzei that the rollers or brushes can be controlled to variably set the break force by, for example, dynamically activating or deactivating one or more of the rollers or brushes while the paper is being fed to the printing drum. Accordingly, if the balance between the tractor 10 and the feeding force applied downstream of the photosensitive drum 19 is slightly lost, Chinzei's device does not variably set the breaking force to compensate for the imbalance.

Furthermore, Chinzei does not teach or suggest the claimed "controller to control the variable braking force applied by the braking device according to the setting made by said braking force setting device." Although Chinzei may in fact include a controller to apply the back load to prevent a paper skew, there is no teaching or suggestion in Chinzei that such a controller can control the braking force applied to the paper sheet. In fact, Chinzei discusses controlling the back load to prevent a paper skew with reference to its first embodiment, which includes only a single elastic member 12 applying the back load force. See Chinzei, paragraph [0013]. Thus, the controller in Chinzei is responsible merely controls when the back load force is applied, but does not control the amount of back load force that is variably applied.

Accordingly, Chinzei fails to teach these features of claim 1. Miyakoshi fails to overcome the deficiencies of Chinzei in teaching these features. Thus, claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 8 and 17 depend from claim 1 and are similarly allowable. Claims 15-16 and 18-20 are allowable for their respective dependencies from an allowable claim.

Claims 4, 11 and 23 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei in view of Miyakoshi and Rumpel, U.S. Patent No. 5,350,100. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 4, 11 and 23 depend from an allowable independent claim. Rumpel does not overcome the deficiencies of Chinzei and Miyakoshi in teaching the features of the independent claims. In fact, Rumpel is merely relied upon by the Examiner for its alleged teachings of setting the braking force according to the type of the continuous paper sheet. Thus, claims 4, 11 and 23 are allowable.

Claims 5, 12 and 24 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei in view of Miyakoshi and Ara Yoji, JP 61094955. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 12 and 24 depend from an allowable independent claim. Ara Yoji does not overcome the deficiencies of Chinzei and Miyakoshi in teaching the features of the independent claims. In fact, Ara Yoji is merely relied upon by the Examiner for its alleged teachings of setting the braking force according to conditions of installation environment. Thus, claims 5, 12 and 24 are allowable.

Claims 6, 13 and 25-28 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei in view of Miyakoshi and Wassermann, U.S. Patent No. 3,259,288. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6, 13 and 25-28 depend from an allowable independent claim. Wassermann does not overcome the deficiencies of Chinzei and Miyakoshi in teaching the features of the independent claims. In fact, Wassermann is merely relied upon by the Examiner for its alleged teachings of an evacuating device to apply a suction force to the printing paper sheet. Thus, claims 6, 13 and 25-28 are allowable.

In view of the above, each of the claims in this application is in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. **325772024500**.

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